ACROSS / A14
NPA rebels release Army lieutenant

METRO / A17
PNP recommends filing of charges vs 9 cops in Parañaque shootout

SPORTS / A15
Las Vegas venue for fight between Pacquiao, Hatton

WORLD / A19
Gov't to judge: Jail Madoff without bail

Drug suspects got connections in high places

By Dona Pazzibugan

SEVERAL INFLUENTIAL PERSONS TRIED to intervene on behalf of the families of the "Alabang Boys," Director General Dionisio Santiago of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) told reporters shortly before he faced a probe of the case in the House of Representatives.

"They have connections in high places. But the question is whether these connections would act on their behalf," Santiago said at a weekly news forum

DRUG A4

Doc's message cleanses teeners' MySpace pages



CHICAGO—MANY teenagers cleaned up their MySpace profiles, deleting mentions of sex and booze and boosting privacy settings, if they got a simple

DOC'S A1

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, January 7, 2009 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 38 P18

Palawan folk save stranded 8-foot dugong

By Redempto Anda
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—AN EIGHT-foot-long sea cow that was stranded in a lagoon in a coastal barangay here was rescued by a group of fishermen on New Year's Day, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Fisherman Henry Butlas found the sea cow, locally called dugong, trapped by low tide in the lagoon fronting his house in Barangay Marufinas. He sought the help of other local residents to coax it back to

PALAWAN A1



BACK YOU GO Residents of Marufinas in Puerto Princesa City help a stranded sea cow, locally called dugong, back into the open sea on New Year's Day. The World Wide Fund for Nature has set up a rescue network for dugongs, which face a high risk of extinction.

Bribespeak: '3M pizza' to 'tatlong manok'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FROM "3M PIZZA," THE ALLEGATION OF a bribe offer in the drug trafficking case involving the "Alabang Boys" has morphed into "tatlong manok" [literally three chickens] or P3 million."

At the hearing by the House committee on illegal drugs, Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino confirmed yesterday the bribe offer from a relative of Joseph Tecson, one of the three suspects. The two others are Richard Brodett and Jorge Joseph.

Shortly after detaining the three young

BRIBESPEAK A4

Boys' lawyer drafted order



VERANO: Taking a chance



BLANCAFLOR: "Very unusual"



RESADO: On the spot



ZUÑO: Defensive



GOOSEBUMPS The PDEA's Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino takes the oath before testifying at the House inquiry into the alleged bribe attempt for the release of the "Alabang Boys."

Verano used DOJ letterhead

By Norman Bordadora and Leila B. Salaverria

THE LAWYER FOR THE SO-called "Alabang Boys" yesterday admitted preparing the order for the release of the drug suspects for the signature of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez two days before Christmas.

Lawyer Felisberto Verano also owned up to having printed the draft order on a Department of Justice letterhead that he said he obtained after years of handling cases that involve the department.

Verano said he sent the copy of the draft order to the office of Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor on the morning of Dec. 22 hours before he and the parents of suspect Richard

BOYS' LAWYER A4

PDEA man in eye of storm a battle-scarred Marine

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

BEFORE JOINING THE PHILIPPINE Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino saw action in strife-torn areas in Muslim Mindanao as a Marine officer.

Marcelino is the PDEA officer who spoke of three alleged attempts to bribe him and his men in exchange for the release of the so-called "Alabang Boys." Marcelino said he said no and stood his ground.

Mindanao was one posting Marcelino would never forget, citing his work on intelligence during the Dos Palmas kidnapping saga in 2001 as his most difficult assignment, one that kept him away from his family for a long time.

Dos Palmas involved the kidnapping of 20 people, including three Americans, from a tourist resort on Palawan Island. The incident drew world headlines.

"Once, on Sept. 30, 2001, we had an encounter in Basilan and we were almost wiped out," Marcelino said in Pilipino. "For a whole day and night, no reinforcements came."

"That was also the time when my youngest child, Arnis, was born. It was

PDEA MAN A4

'Alabang Boys' supplied Embassy, says PDEA chief

By Leila B. Salaverria and Marlon Ramos

A WATERING HOLE OF THE RICH AND famous, where highly publicized brawls have occurred, has received another blow to its glitzy image.

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency

ALABANG A4

'Stop feeling helpless that RP is hopeless'

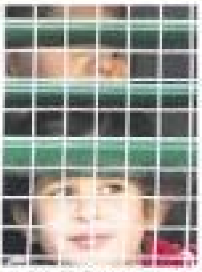
By Tarra Quismundo

AT A TIME WHEN CONTROVERSIES have become daily fare, what can each Filipino do to help uphold the good?

Simple: Be positive. Pay taxes. Volunteer. Vote.

Leaders of Kaya Natin!, a movement for good governance, made the checklist when asked what every Juan and Maria could contribute to the advocacy for ethical leaders—a seemingly rare breed in a bureaucracy where even the highest officials are embroiled in scandals.

STOP A1



INNOCENTS Palestinian boys who fled their homes during the Israeli offensive peek out of a window of a UN school in Gaza.

Israeli troops push closer to Gaza cities

GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP—ISRAELI SHELLS slammed into Gaza and ground forces pushed closer to major population centers Tuesday after Israel ignored mounting international calls for an immediate ceasefire in the 11-day assault that has killed hundreds of Palestinians.

In fighting that raged early Tuesday morning, at least 16 people were killed in shelling up and down the Gaza Strip from tanks and naval craft, local hospital officials said. Only two of the dead were confirmed as militants.

Tanks rumbled closer to the towns of Khan Younis and Deir el Balah in south and central Gaza but were still several kilometers outside, witnesses said, adding that the sounds of fighting could be heard from around the new Israeli positions. Israel already has encircled Gaza

ISRAELI A9



DECEPTIVE CALM An Israeli APC stands guard on the border with Gaza.

Second FRONT PAGE

SIX DIGIT 4 1 0 9 3 7

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN 18 20 22 29 39 42 P14,573,811.60

POWER LOTTO 6/55+1/10 6 19 22 51 53 + 1 P50,000,000.00

No settlement in golf brawl

By DJ Yap and Christian V. Esguerra

THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT BEing reached between the protagonists in the Antipolo golf club brawl dimmed Tuesday after the lawyers of the opposing sides indicated each would not initiate the talks.

First move

Father's fault

Mutual friends

GMA outlines plan for Mindanao peace

By Christian V. Esguerra

Crash program



PRESIDENT ARROYO: Bold look

Gloria makes bold fashion statement

Christian V. Esguerra

Air strikes kill 10 Moro rebs

By Edwin O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

FAKE JOBS, INVESTMENTS, LOTTERY

OFWs warned vs online scams

By Cynthia D. Balana



UK picks Manila new hub of visa processing

By Cynthia D. Balana



Correction

Oil firms: P8 per liter rollback impossible

By Abigail L. Ho

COCO LEVY

Danding bucks revival of civil case

By Alcuin Papa

Forced tax on coconut farmers

Antipolo mayor dies

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Share a Night of Opulence and Revelry



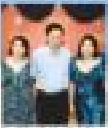


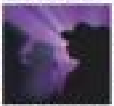




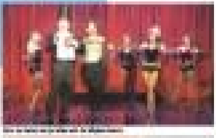








Globe Business, the corporate arm of Globe Telecom that takes care of business customers, celebrated a great year by hosting a series of Appreciation Nights for its valued partners in Davao, Cebu, and Manila on December 2, 4, and 11 respectively.

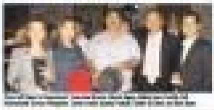














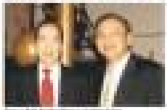


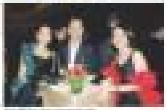


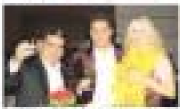




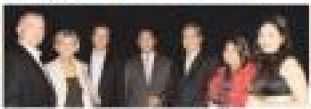




















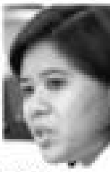
Globe Business

Modest growth in airport traffic seen

Ex-general waiting for euro's return

Comelec seeks P11B for automation

'Stop feeling helpless that RP is hopeless'



PADACA

Discernment

Voting, volunteering

Palawan folk save dugong

Vulnerable

Uncommon occurrence

Doc's message cleanses teeners' MySpace pages

Positive impact

'Great icebreaker'

Boys' lawyer drafted release order

Not normal

Fraternity brother

Overzealous

Messenger

'Alabang Boys' fathers file habeas corpus petition

Habeas corpus petition

P50-million bribe

Bribespeak: '3M pizza' to 'tatlong manok'



SANTIAGO at House hearing: Text message saying he had been paid off sent PDEA director general on warpath.

PMA classmate

Three-month planning

Cornered, taxed

No offer

High on drugs

Grammatical errors

Sudden turnaround

Nervous

Drug suspects got connections

Ex-congressman's call

Golfer

Linacao nephew

Palace: No need to step in

Israeli troops push closer to Gaza cities

130 militants killed



'Lifeblown' humanitarian crisis

US blames Hamas

Palestinian toll

'Alabang boys' supplied 'Embassy,' says PDEA chief

Embassy statement

Shut down

PDEA man in eye of storm

Magdalo episode

A tabloid reporter

PMA beckons

Incorruptible

Challenge accepted

Philippine Daily Inquirer
OPINION

Grey areas

Editorial

WE CANNOT REPEAT OFTEN ENOUGH THAT what is legal isn't necessarily what is right. Put another way, while the law may require meeting a high standard of evidentiary proof to be met before imposing a penalty on someone accused of wrongdoing, society has every right to impose sanctions on individuals who hold public office for merely committing the appearance of impropriety. [illegible]

[illegible]



Abraham and Moses to blame for Gaza war

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

[illegible]

All in the mind

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

[illegible]

Blog power

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



'Dyip'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



A man's life in full

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



Eartha Kitt's Philippine connection

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



To stop the 'monsters,' RP needs good citizens

LETTERS

Ghastly Israel



Society unable to accept disabled

The many ways shoes have been used as tools of war and diplomacy

Spreading the spirit of abundance

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Death of a Laoag heritage school

By Cristina Arzadon
Laoag City

HERITAGE ADVOCATES refuse to throw in the towel on the conversion of Laoag City's heritage school to a shopping center even as the mall project appears to be a done deal.

The conversion of the Laoag Central Elementary School, housing historic Gabaldon-type buildings, to a mall has caught the attention of conservationists who foresee another heritage disaster similar to the fate of other structures and buildings with historical significance.

Based on a marker inscribed in its façade, the school building was built in 1929 after the 2.5-hectare property, owned by the Roman Catholic Church, was donated to the then town of Laoag by Nueva Segovia Bishop Santiago Sancho in 1926.

The other Gabaldon structure within the lot is the Home Economics building.

Laoag is also home to another schoolhouse, the Gabaldon Elementary School, named after Rep. Isauro Gabaldon, who sponsored Act 1801 of the National Assembly for the construction of elementary schools around the country during the American period.

Travel writer and heritage advocate Ivan Anthony Henares started posting comments on his blog and generated reactions calling attention to the demolition and relocation of the LCES building to another area.



THE 80-YEAR-OLD Laoag Central Elementary School will be demolished and relocated to give way to a shopping mall. CRISTINA ARZADON

Misplaced priorities

"Another heritage school could soon become a victim of misplaced priorities if nothing is done to stop the rampage," said Henares, a member of the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS) board of trustees.

He echoed the community's concern that the proposed mall would disturb the city's historical landscape while ground movements might pose a threat to the structural stability of the ancient belfry right beside the school compound. The belfry is a major historical, cultural and religious icon.

The need to relocate the school has been the subject of discussion for many years by the city government due to the growing congestion around the premises of the school in the middle of downtown's commercial district.

The city government started public hearings in June last year following negotiations by officials with the mall developer.

Reportedly the project was met with stiff opposition from small businessmen and the school's Parents-Teachers Community Association.

The business community raised the fear that the presence of a giant mall would dominate competition and eventually render small business operators bankrupt.

The school's PTCA lamented that the historical landmark would be erased in the name of commercialization.

"Education should never be sacrificed for commercialization, no matter the perceived increase in income that the Roman Catholic Church and the city government will realize from the conversion," the parents and teachers said in a published manifesto.

"The LCES for its more than 80 years of existence has become a historical landmark of the City of Laoag as a bastion of education," they said.

Restoration program

The Department of Education and the HCS have embarked on a project to restore historic school buildings through a heritage program. Funds are provided to restore one heritage schoolhouse per region around the country for the benefit of teachers and students.

There is no showing, however, that the Laoag school has been lined up for rehabilitation under the program.

Mayor Michael Fariñas is mindful of the community's sentiments but he noted that the LCES has not been declared a historic site.

"[The school] is not in its original state. It has already undergone several renovations. What is there to preserve?" he asked.

Fariñas obtained a certification from the National Historical Institute that the LCES was not among the seven sites declared national shrines and national historical landmarks in Ilocos Norte.

He said benefits and drawbacks were carefully weighed before the city government and the Catholic Church decided to push the school's relocation. The project, he said, would provide job opportunities, increase city revenues and perk up business activities.

"Ultimately, the LCES is no longer conducive for education purposes. Children and teachers are surrounded by constant distractions," he said.

The expanding business district is a growing threat to the school necessitating its relocation to another area, the mayor said.

"We are not sacrificing education. We are offering a healthier environment for our children," he said.

The mall project is covered by a 25-year lease agreement entered into by the city government, the Catholic Church and Pampanga-based mall developer Bellagio Holdings Inc.

The agreement was signed in December last year. The developer has not indicated when construction will begin.

Under the agreement, the school will be relocated to a five-hectare lot fronting the Laoag bishop's residence in the northern residential area away from downtown.

For these kids, NSTP is more than just sweeping the yards

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Dagupan City

MA. CELESTE CASTRO FELT bad the first time her students taking the National Service Training Program (NSTP) were called "walis-TP" in the communities they served.

They may have earned the name because every time her students visited the villages in Dagupan City, they brought with them walis (brooms) to sweep the front yards of houses there.

In 2004, or two years after the NSTP was implemented after the abolition of the compulsory Citizens' Military Training or the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, Castro has heard enough.

She then came up with a program that required her students not only to sweep but also to plant trees and beautify the villages.

In December, Castro, NSTP head of the Lyceum Northwestern University (LNU) in Dagupan, was among the 10 NSTP directors from different colleges and universities in the country who received an award from the National Youth Commission for best environmental programs in the NSTP.

"We did not expect we would win," Castro said.

She said when the NYC wrote her to ask her to submit her school's entry to the 1st NSTP Green Philippines Awards, she just submitted a report on what her NSTP students have been doing.

Little did she expect that when the NYC validated the program she called "Clean and Green," it had already created an enormous impact on the youth who served and on the communities they served. The NYC was impressed.

"We were very happy because all our efforts were finally recognized," Castro said.

Her strong desire to remove the "walis-TP" image of her students has pushed her to innovate and improve the civic welfare training service component of the program.

"I wanted to make a difference. I believe there was something more than just sweeping the yards," Castro said. "Why not enhance the students' environmental awareness?"

In the days that followed, Castro realized that her program had become an environmental learning experience not only for her students but for residents in the communities as well.

The LNU has adopted the villages of Mayombo, [illegible], Bonuan [illegible] and Tapuac.

Hostile residents

"At first, we encountered pockets of hostile residents," she said. "We would sweep and paint a bamboo fence today only to see it gone the following day."

But this did not deter her and her students from continuing their work.

"Our students continued seeding [illegible] and planting trees and ornamental plants," Castro said. "Then, they lined up stones along the roadsides and painted them."

It wasn't long and the residents themselves took care of what the students started. "They began to join us in our activities. They asked for seedlings to be planted in their own backyards," she said.



Across the NATION

NPA rebels release Army lieutenant

COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS freed on Tuesday an Army lieutenant who was held captive for two months in a remote village in Agusan del Sur but said they were still holding three policemen taken during a bloody weekend attack.

[illegible]





[illegible]

Pampanga gov seeks ouster of 2 top cops after siege

[illegible]

Project raises Misamis hopes on fish harvests

[illegible]

Bishop wants girls taught self-defense

[illegible]

Benguet farmers shrug off, cope with Big Chill

[illegible]

Yeng tipped as Burger King head coach

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

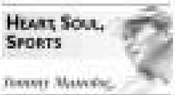
Hatton okays Vegas venue

Fight details known next week



Egos and personalities—a recipe for disaster

HEART, SOUL, SPORTS



Tommy Manotoc

Nuggets nail fourth straight but lose Anthony to injury



SJC 'Rambolan' 2nd round today

Top cyclists gear up for Nat'l Open

V'dingham 3-mendous for Hapee

By Jasmine W. Payo

IN THIS GAME, HAPEE TOOTHPASTE didn't mind being called plain lucky.

The Complete Protection fended off Magnolia Pancentro's furious rally with a Josh Vanlandingham triple with 3.5 seconds left for a 78-75 win yesterday that spoiled the Wizards' bid for an outright semifinal slot in the PBL PG Flex Linoleum Cup at the San Beda gym.

"We were just lucky in the last play," said Hapee coach Geo Mandilla. "Both trailed at one. We controlled the game but when we lost Jeff Morial [due to an injury], we had a problem."

Vanlandingham buried the game-winner following a fumbled pass from Bari, to salvage the game, where the Complete Protection held as many as 18 points, 51-33.

"We were lucky that Josh found a good position," said Abanilla of Vanlandingham, a 6-foot-3 Fil-Am rookie from Pacific Lutheran University in Washington.

In the second game, early semifinalist Harbour Centre coasted to a 93-82 victory over Burger King for its ninth win in 10 matches.

Reed Juntilla registered with 19 points for the Batang Pier who led all the way. Ron Munchimbo also came through with a solid all-around performance for 16 points, nine rebounds, four assists and two blocks.

Hapee grabbed a share of third place with Burger King at 5-5 to boost its faint hopes of securing an automatic Final Four slot.

Magnolia, in second place with a 7-3 record, only need to win one of its last two games to join Harbour Centre in the semifinals.

Burger King fell to 3-7, just barely ahead of the cellar-dwelling Pharex. The team with the worst record misses the quarterfinals.

Magnolia guard Leo Linimay, whose bucket with 13.6 seconds left tied the contest at 75, tried to push the game into overtime but his three-point attempt fell short at the buzzer.

A plus METRO

9 cops in Parañaque shootout to be charged

PNP: Policemen committed operational lapses

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE INTERNAL Affairs Service (PNP-IAS) yesterday recommended the filing of administrative charges against nine policemen who took part in last month's Parañaque City shootout with suspected robbers that left several civilians dead.

[illegible]

Cop fires at councilor's car, gets tongue-lashing

[illegible]



EYE-CATCHER
An optical shop with a catchy name at Trinoma Mall in Quezon City

Commonwealth Avenue renovation seen to ease, speed up traffic flow



DEVOTEE'S FAITH

Uniform tricycle fares in Navotas eyed

QC gov't unveils new 'Tandang Sora' statue



NEW monument of Melchora Aquino, also known as "Tandang Sora," in Quezon City.

METROBRIEFS

Two dead bodies found

No leads on slay case

Tax breaks for firms mulled

Upsilonian outstanding award

Worker's plan to dupe employer backfires

Gov't to judge: Jail Madoff without bail

NEW YORK—A PROSECUTOR on Monday asked that Bernard Madoff be jailed pending trial, saying the disgraced financier violated an agreement with the court by mailing watches, jewelry, cufflinks and mittens worth more than $1 million to relatives and friends.

"The defendant's recent actions amount to obstruction of justice," Assistant US Attorney Marc Litt told US Magistrate Judge Ronald Ellis at an hour-long bail hearing. The prosecutor said one package of items that was accompanied by a handwritten note from Madoff may alone be worth more than $1 million.

The judge ordered both sides to submit written arguments this week and said he would rule later.

Madoff's lawyer, Ira Sorkin, said his client did not violate a court-imposed asset freeze by mailing heirlooms through the post office to his brother, a son and daughter-in-law and a New York couple vacationing in Florida. Besides watches and jewelry, other items included $25 cufflinks, pens and a $300 pair of mittens.

Sorkin called it an innocent mistake and said Madoff and his wife sought the return of the items they had sent last Dec. 24 as soon as they were told they could not send them out. He also suggested that some of the items mailed belonged to Madoff's wife, and therefore were not subject to a court order at that time.

"We maintain it happened innocently," Sorkin said. "He's not a threat to the community, and there's no danger he's going to flee."

The 2nd-minute court hearing was the latest chapter in an ongoing struggle between prosecutors and Madoff over his bail.

Madoff was released without restrictions after his arrest, angering critics who thought it was unfair that a man accused of such a large fraud could walk the streets. Conditions of his bail were later tightened to the point that Madoff is now under constant surveillance and confined to his Manhattan penthouse around the clock, the only exception being court hearings.

His $10-million bail was secured by his homes in Manhattan, Long Island and Florida.



COURT officers clear the way for disgraced financier Robert Madoff after a bail hearing in New York.

The 70-year-old Madoff, a former Nasdaq stock market chair, was arrested last Dec. 11 on securities fraud charges alleging he duped investors out of as much as $50 billion in a giant Ponzi scheme.

At some point during his home confinement, Madoff and his wife decided to start sending the personal items to relatives and friends, including cufflinks that had been given to him by his granddaughter.

Sorkin said lawyers learned for the first time that the watch and jewelry had been sent to relatives and the couple in Florida when they were preparing a statement of Madoff's assets last Dec. 30 that had to be turned over to the Securities and Exchange Commission in the future.

Litt said the government had taken possession of most of the items, including the sweet expensive ones.

The issue of Madoff's assets is an important part of the investigation because authorities are trying to determine what is left and use it as restitution for burned investors.

The defense lawyer offered to let the government take custody of any jewelry or other small items belonging to Madoff, an offer that Litt said would be impossible to carry out because there might be valuable small assets such as paintings and sculptures "scattered around the country and the world." AP



OBAMA

Obama sees quick OK for rescue package

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT-elect Barack Obama expects the new Democratic-controlled Congress that convenes Tuesday to quickly approve hundreds of billions of dollars in new spending to tackle the "very sick" US economy.

On his first full day in Washington after winding up his holiday vacation, Obama plunged into crisis talks on Monday with congressional leaders.

Even two weeks before his Jan. 20 inauguration, Obama is already facing a dose of reality as congressional leaders put him on notice that his multibillion-dollar economic plan would not be ready before he takes office, and his commerce secretary choice, Bill Richardson, withdrew under an ethics cloud.

Obama has insisted that bold and quick action is necessary if the United States is to rebound from the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. He has said repeatedly he wants a plan that will create 3 million new jobs. AP

Toyota to shut plants; risk of unrest seen in China

TOKYO/BEIJING—TOYOTA Motor Corp will shut all its factories in Japan for 11 days to combat a global slowdown that is not only hitting company profits but could, a report says, unleash a wave of social unrest in China.

The two factors show how the crisis, likened to the Great Depression of the 1930s in its scope and severity, has spread from the US housing and banking sectors to threaten every part of the world economy.

China relies on strong growth to create jobs for its millions of migrant workers and graduates, but risks an upsurge in protests and riots in 2009 as rising unemployment stokes discontent, a state-run magazine said on Tuesday.

The unusually stark report was in this week's Outlook (Liaowang) Magazine, issued by the official Xinhua news agency.

"Without doubt, now we're entering a peak period for mass incidents," a senior Xinhua reporter, Huang Huo, told the magazine, using the official euphemism for riots and protests.

"In 2009, Chinese society may face even more conflicts and clashes that will test even more the governing abilities of all levels of the Party and government."

Researchers at the country's central bank forecast China's economy will probably grow a healthy eight percent this year, in contrast to many independent analysts who predict a much sharper slowdown.

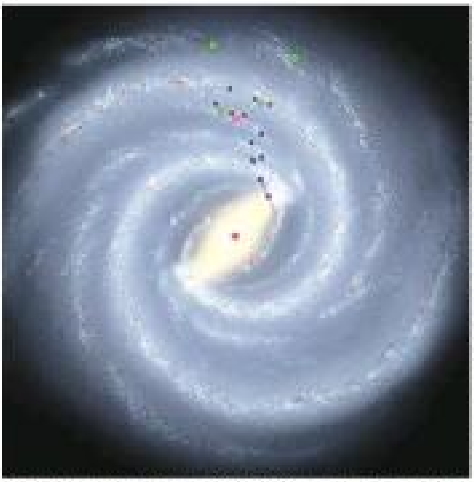
Governments and central banks have been working overtime to try to limit the fallout of the global crisis, flooding the financial system with cash, cutting interest rates and increasing spending. Reuters

The WORLD

India: Pakistanis must have backed attack

NEW DELHI—PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES "MUST have had" a hand in the deadly Mumbai siege, India's prime minister on Tuesday said, stopping just short of directly accusing Islamabad of aiding the gunmen.

Milky Way galaxy bigger than thought



THIS ARTIST'S drawing shows the latest view of the Milky Way's structure—larger, bulkier and spinning faster than astronomers once thought.

Russia gas shipments to Balkans shut off

Bush to set up 3 marine monuments in Pacific



THESE corals off Jarvis Island will form part of the largest marine conservation effort in history.

Sokor opposition ends parliament occupation

WORLDBRIEFS

Obama picks CIA chief

Premier rejects calls for resignation

Hunt launched for mass killer

TV channel in Sri Lanka attacked

Cat-and-mouse game in Antarctica

IN THIS ISSUE
- Gov't eyes $1.5-B bond float /B2
- 3-yr T-bond rate drops to 5.875% /B3

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Associate Editor Clarissa S. Mariano

BUSINESS



Inflation eased further to 8% in Dec.

Bangko Sentral chief hints at more monetary easing

By Michelle V. Remo and Doris C. Dumlao

CONSUMER PRICES INCREASED AT A MUCH SLOWER 8-percent year-on-year last December due mainly to the continued decline in fuel prices that tempered adjustments in the prices of other commodities, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

The inflation rate reverted to single-digit territory in November when it hit 9.9 percent after hovering beyond 10 percent since June last year.

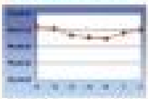
Core inflation, which factors out volatile prices of selected food and energy items, settled at 7.3 percent in December, easing from the previous month's 7.9 percent.

Price movements in December brought the average inflation rate for the entire 2008 at 9.3 percent, well within the range of 9-11 percent projected by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

INFLATION/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B3)

Stocks close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.3 PERCENT lower yesterday as foreign investors took a wait-and-see attitude, dealers said.

The composite index fell 5.11 points to 1,860.00.

However, the all-shares index gained 0.8 percent to 1,242.16 points.

There were 51 gainers against 33 losers and 37 unchanged.

Turnover amounted to 800.4 million shares worth P1.7 billion.

The foreign investors, who dominate the local stock market, "are still adopting a wait-and-see attitude" toward the local economy, despite the government's announcement that inflation fell further in December, said Richie Sioda of A. T. de Castro Securities Corp.

Although foreign investors are holding off, "the retail brokers were buying because most of the companies are undervalued," he said.

PLDT fell 1.3 percent to P2,180. But rival Globe Telecom rose 4.4 percent to P835 and Energy Development Corp. gained 3.15 percent to P2.84. San Miguel Corp.'s "A" shares rose 2.6 percent to P41.00, while its "B" shares gained 1.2 percent to P42.50. AFP

SMC takes option for Petron control

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucas and Daxim L. Lucas

SAN MIGUEL CORP. HAS PROVISIONALLY locked in its first major diversification purchase, sealing a pact with British investment fund Ashmore Group for the right to acquire an indirect controlling stake in oil refiner Petron Corp.

In a disclosure, San Miguel chief finance and corporate information officer Ferdinand Constantino said Dutch holding firm Sea Refinery Holdings BV (SEA BV) of the Ashmore Group has granted San Miguel the option to acquire from it up to 100 percent in a local subsidiary called SEA Refinery Corp.

SEA Refinery currently owns 50.1 percent of Petron. This includes the 40-percent stake it recently purchased from Philippine National Oil Co. for P25.7 billion, or P6.85 a share, and a 10-percent stake transferred to SEA but still held by SEA BV.

Constantino said SMC has two years from Dec. 24, 2008, to exercise its option to buy SEA BV's entire stake in SEA Refinery.

SMC has not indicated what will make it decide to exercise its option to acquire SEA Refinery, but sources familiar with the transaction told the Inquirer that the decision to finalize the sale would ultimately depend on whether Petron's share price would improve to "acceptable levels" within the agreed period.

"If SMC sees Petron's market price move closer to the P6.85 strike price, it will probably buy SEA Refinery," said the official familiar with the transaction. "If the price stays depressed during the period, it's just an option, and they can walk away with smaller losses."

Should San Miguel complete its takeover of SEA Refinery, it will gain control of Petron, while the Ashmore Group, through SEA BV, will still hold 10 percent of the oil

SMC TAKES B2

Gov't eyes $1.5-B bond float

Investments registered with Peza up by 7%

DMCI unit bags ₱5-B deal

MPIC selling 51% stake in Landco

SMC takes option for Petron control

Inflation eased further to 8% in December



Another 'artificial' shortage

Buying peace

Aboitiz revamp

3-yr T-bond rate drops to 5.875%

By Michelle V. Remo

Gov't earns ₱13B from Malampaya

MOTORING

2009 OUTLOOK

Campi: dual-purpose vehicles will become more popular

ITS THE YEAR OF THE OX.



A wild ride along North Luzon loop

What to do with cars you cannot sell



MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

Positive chain reaction

Parallel solution

The 2008 Car of the Year: Subaru Impreza WRX STi



ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Mean machine



LIFESTYLE Parenting

Where parents can go to for help—online

When in doubt, turn to your new best friend: Google

DON'T THINK OF THE INTERNET as just a source of funny videos and annoying forwarded mail. Today's tech-savvy parents are lucky; they have a wealth of information at their fingertips.

[illegible]

Parenting.com

[illegible]

Parenting.iVillage.com

[illegible]

Dr. Toy

[illegible]

Parenthood.com

[illegible]

FamilyDoctor.org

[illegible]

Baby socks for proud mamas

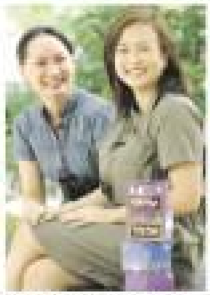
Skip the shoes and let your kids' feet grow healthy and strong

By Pam Pastor





MAX JUAN wears super sneakers.



"MOMPRENEURS" Sheryll Ang-Tiong and Rianna Bocco-Trinidad





LITTLE Miss Mary Janes



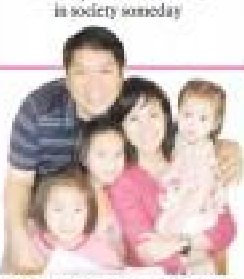
Socks that look like shoes

What parents wish for their kids in '09

Moms and dads send out a general thought of goodwill for their children—that they will be on the right path, protected and nurtured, and will make a positive difference in society someday



'More opportunities to travel'

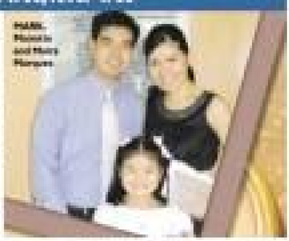


'For them to become eco-friendly'



'A hobby or sport to be passionate about'

'Cold-free, cough-free, fever-free'



"The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one."—Elbert Hubbard



'That they learn to forgive our mistakes'



FOUR-YEAR-OLD Bryan [illegible] Babylegs



BONDING moment: The Proud Mama Nursing Bib.



[illegible] wears Babylegs on her arms

"One photo studio said so many babies go there to have photos taken while wearing our socks. Even my pediatrician tells me that so many babies come to the clinic wearing our socks," Hanna said.

Just like every successful product, Funky Feet already has copycats out in the market. But Hanna and Sheryll aren't worried. "Open a pack and you can really tell the difference. We have people coming to tell us they're [illegible] or they're hot or they're itchy. When you're talking about baby skin, you really need good, soft material."

Babylegs and nursing bibs

Hanna and Sheryll also designed the Proud Mama Nursing Bib. "It's 100-percent cotton. We wanted it very very soft. We want it big enough so you won't be worried that it will flip. It's reversible too," Sheryll said.

"And the material is airy," Hanna said. "There's a plastic boning that allows you to maintain eye contact with your baby because breastfeeding is a bonding moment. This is something we really feel strongly about. We both breastfed—it was a big thing in our lives. It's tough at the start but it's really rewarding in the long run. It's good for the children. My kids have never been sick. They're bright and 'fine.' I've been a working breastfeeding mom. Pumping in the office, it's hard. We feel like giving whatever support we can to a mom who's working that hard to do it. We just want to try to make it easier for them because we've been there and we think they should carry on."

Another product carried by Proud Mama is Babylegs Leg and Arm Warmers which were developed by a mom in the United States. Hanna said, "As a mom, you try to be as prepared as you can but if you live in the Philippines, how often will you carry a jacket in your bag? But if I'm in the mall and freezing my family, I can just put that on my kids' legs or arms and it takes up only a small space in the diaper bag."

Argyle, stripes and animal prints

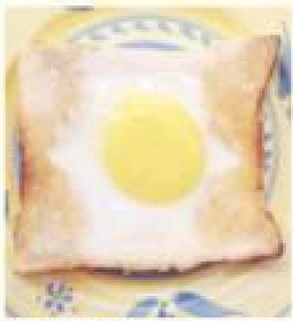
Hanna and Sheryll have only been selling Babylegs for a little over a month now but the response has also been overwhelming. "It opened up our market. Funky Feet can only be worn by babies from zero to 12 months but Babylegs can be worn by kids in kindergarten, in grade school, even adults wear them. They're fun. You can wear them on your legs, push them down, wear them on your arms." Babylegs comes in a number of designs—from argyle and stripes to skulls and animal prints.

Hanna and Sheryll, who met while working in the same office in 2000 and who quit their corporate jobs to become full-time moms, run their business from their homes. "Sometimes I run into people I used to work with and they would say "Oy, lady of leisure." But it's not true, not when you have two children and your own little business. We have never taken a day off since day one," Hanna said. "It's different when you own something and you're pouring your heart and soul into it. It's 24/7."

Both moms believe they also have their husbands to thank for the success of their business.

Even their little girls help sometimes. "I think it's good for the girls. They grow up seeing their moms do something. Sometimes they even help. I'll say 'Get me Mac.' Or they help count. It makes work much less efficient because you can do it faster on your own but that's why you're home, you're there to spend time with them. We're hoping they'll grow up with an entrepreneurial spirit," said Hanna.

Funky Feet is available in Rustan's, Kiddies in Shakwell, Greenbelt 3, Bambino [illegible], Greenhills Promenade, [illegible] in Shangri-La, [illegible] Department Store and Babyland Branches. Visit http://proudmamastore.multiply.com



MOM AND ME RECIPE

Sunny side toast

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

HERE'S A CUTE BREAKFAST dish you and your child can do together. Studies have shown that if kids help in making a dish, they're more likely to eat it. With a protein-carb combination, this makes a good breakfast on a leisurely morning. Make sure to serve some fruit too.

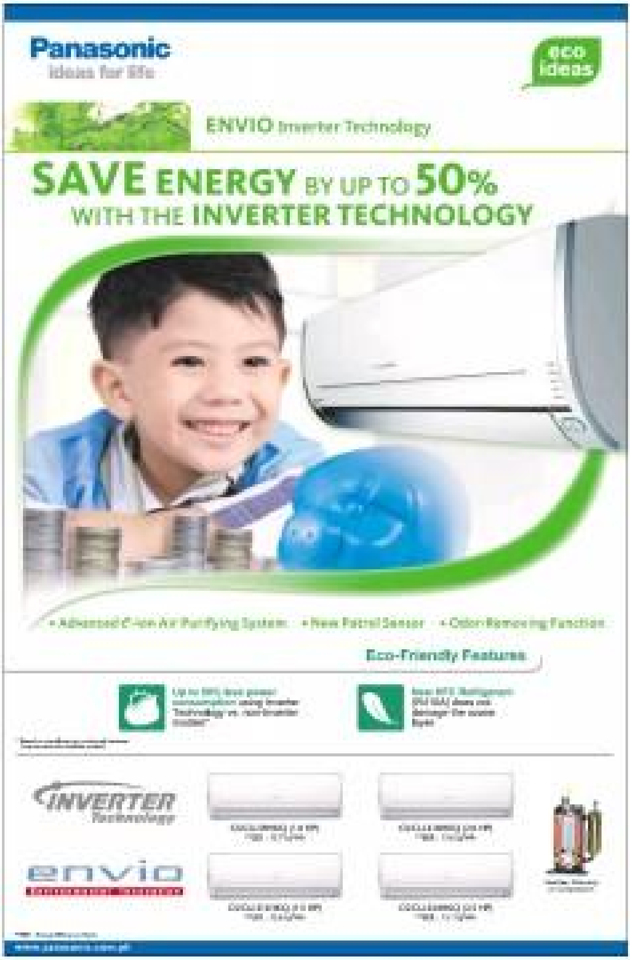
Sunny side toast

For each serving:
- 1 sliced bread
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp butter
- Salt, to taste

Kid's part: Use a cookie cutter to cut out the center of the bread. Suggested shapes: star, heart, circles, etc.

Mom's part: Break the egg gently into a bowl, making sure to keep the yolk intact. Melt the butter in a skillet (preferably a nonstick pan). Add the bread and cook until the underside is brown. With a wide, heat-proof spatula, turn the bread to brown the other side.

While the other side of the bread is browning, carefully slide the egg into the center of the bread (the cut part). Season with salt. Cook until egg is set. Lift bread and egg together and transfer to a serving plate.



Where parents can go to for help—online

From page C1

Familydoctor.org is a good resource for information on everything, from toilet training and diaper rash to acne and ADHD.

Kidshealth.org

Kidshealth.org is a portal that leads you to three websites—the parents' site which offers parenting tips and info, the kids' site which can show young children how the body works, and the teens' site which offers advice and answers to questions they may have about their bodies and their health.

Run by the experts of Nemours Foundation and up since 1995, Kidshealth has been visited by half a billion Internet users. The sites feature articles, animation, even games. Click on The Game Closet for games and activities that can help you and your kids discover more about health and the human body.

Family Education

Family Education (www.familyeducation.com) is a good source of parenting advice, games for the family, activities for kids and even recipes. Currently, the site's most popular articles include "Top 10 Christmas Movies," "Top 10 Stocking Stuffer Gift Ideas" and "Hottest Holiday Toys (ages 7-11)."

Parenting guides are divided according to your children's ages: 0-6, 7-11, 12-18. The site also features food and recipe search, message boards for reaching out to other parents and a "Family Printables Center," which is home to thousands of printable activities for your kids.

Other fun site features include the Child Height Predictor, Cooking Videos, and games, puzzles and contests for [illegible].

Familyfun.com

A website under Disney Publications and the online home of Family Fun magazine, Familyfun.com (familyfun.go.com) offers a lot of fun activities for the whole family. Arts and crafts, parties, recipes, games and travel ideas can all be found on this site. There are also printables for more activities that will keep your kids entertained.

You can even do a quick search and find ideas for kids of all ages (from toddlers to 12-year-olds), no matter what "they're crazy about"—princesses, under the sea, butterflies and bugs, sports, fantasy and history, animals, planes or cars.

Parentstv.org

The online home of The Parents Television Council, a US organization determined to protect children against sex, violence and profanity in entertainment, Parentstv.org is a good website to visit to check which US TV shows are safe for your kids to watch. They have different ratings—red for shows that are unsuitable for children, yellow for shows which contain adult-oriented themes that may be inappropriate, green for family-friendly shows.

PTC also conducts studies that go beyond television. The site features a story on YouTube and how "explicit content is one click away from children" and how "popular child-friendly [illegible] give kids easy access to sexual content and explicit language."

You can also get information about the TV shows children watch the most.

Parent Previews

Want to know if that new movie is safe for your kids to watch? Visit www.parentpreviews.com, a website that reviews movies so parents will know which ones are suitable for their children.

Reviews include tips for parents on family discussions about the movies and video alternatives. The site now has a database of over 1,500 movies, which are not just given an overall grade but also graded according to violence, sexual content, language and drugs/alcohol.

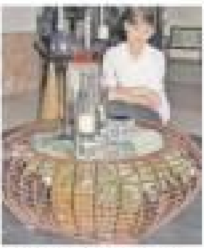
Parent Previews also reviews DVD releases so you'll know which ones are safe to pick up for your kids.



LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining



Home vignettes on exhibit

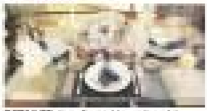


MARILEN Fountian Montenegro created an elegant Pinoy lanai with modern touches.

THE ALABANG TOWN CENTER held an exhibit last December featuring guest designers who created inviting home vignettes.

[illegible]

The exhibit, which ran until the end of December, was held on the ground floor of the Alabang Town Center.



DETAILED shot of my table setting with items from Rustan's

Do-it-yourself

With Anton Barretto and Marian Lopa

Recycling paper doilies

USE INTRICATE PAPER DOILIES TO add an elegant touch to cans or jars of cookies you plan to give away. Use them as the final liner before you close the cap. You can also glue on the cover and write your greeting on it.



Materials

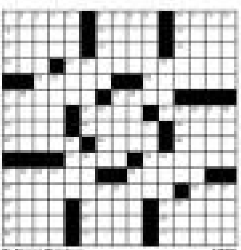
Inexpensive paper doilies
White glue







DAILY CROSSWORD



HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

			3	2	4			
		4				2		
	2	9				6	1	
4								1
6								8
	3	7	5		1	9	6	
			8		7			
		8				5		
		1	2	5	9	3		

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Mix and match themes in your home accents



FIVE-PIECE ceramic tea gift set with handles (P1,195)

FIVE-PIECE Chinese traditional tea gift set in red (P1,195)



Global hub for furniture design



FOUR-PIECE ceramic bowls from China gift set (P595), available in black and red



CRYSTAL candle holder collection ranging from P1,195 to P2,395







DIMENSIONE gift ideas







Mellie Ablaza celebrates her birthday in wonderland





WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alvin Yan Hugen using YKL Photo Solutions





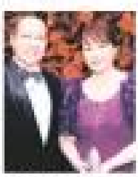






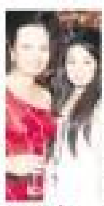




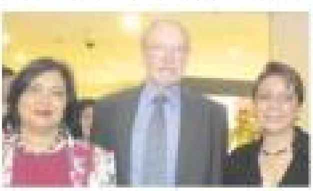




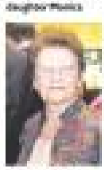




Cine Europa 11

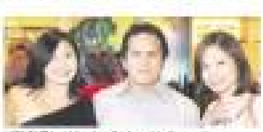














ENTERTAINMENT

TV5 happy to place 3rd in network race



By Marinel R. Cruz

"WE DID BETTER THAN WE expected in 2008," declared Jasper Evangelista, senior vice president for brand management of the newly reorganized channel TV5.

Since relaunching in August 2008, TV5 has experienced a 5 percent audience share, higher than its 4 percent target, said Evangelista, citing figures from the National Urban Television Audience Measurement (Nutam) of the AGB Nielsen Media Research.

The channel formerly known as ABC 5 also placed third in a survey of the most watched stations nationwide, conducted by the AGB Nielsen Media Research in September.

'Small victories'

"We cherish small victories," Evangelista told Inquirer Entertainment on Saturday. "So far, we're happy that it's really happening. We don't have the financial muscle to face Channels 2 and 7 head on, but this year we have new things in the bag."

This year, Evangelista said, TV5 plans to build its own stable of talents. "Right now, we're an open shop. Whether you're from Channel 2 or 7, you're welcome to work with us."

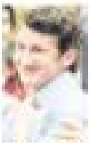
He continued: "Our goal is to innovate, provide alternatives to the usual fare. But we also pick our battles. We don't intend to engage Channels 2 and 7 in areas where they're strong—like producing teleseryes. We will try to get some success in other areas. Our audience is very young, so we come up with kid stuff like anime. We're introducing new things left and right."

Research group

So how does TV5 come up with new shows? "There's a research group that does diagnostics on viewer profile… We're scientific in our approach," Evangelista explained. "Apart from the overnight ratings result, we have regular focus group discussions. We do in-depth interviews, where we ask people what they like and don't like to see."

US critics top pick: 'Waltz With Bashir'

NEW YORK—"Waltz With Bashir," a groundbreaking animated documentary about Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, won the National Society of Film Critics' 2008 Best Picture award Saturday.



BEST Actor Sean Penn in "Milk."

But "Happy-Go-Lucky," Mike Leigh's tale of a cheerful optimist whose world view is put to the test, came away with four of the 11 awards for 2008 films. It won Best Director and Best Screenplay for Leigh, Best Actress for Sally Hawkins and Best Supporting Actor for Eddie Marsan.

The critics' group also named Sean

US CRITICS B4

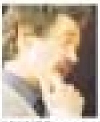
Will Smith voted 2008's top moneymaking movie star



WILL Smith landed the top slot for his movies "Hancock" and "Seven Pounds," according to the Quigley Publishing Co.'s annual poll. — AP

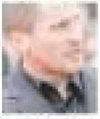
NEW YORK—NO NAME ON THE MARQUEE was more pleasing to theater owners in 2008 than Will Smith, according to a survey of movie exhibitors.

Smith, star of "Hancock" and "Seven Pounds," was voted the star who generated the most box office revenue for theaters in an annual survey by Quigley Publishing Co.



ROBERT Downey Jr. placed second for "Iron Man" and "Tropic Thunder." — AP

Smith is only the second black actor to be chosen in the Quigley poll, which since 1932 has asked movie exhibitors to vote on the 10 stars who brought in the most business. Sidney Poitier topped the poll in 1968.



CHRISTIAN Bale is in the third place for "The Dark Knight." — AP

Smith's superhero actioner blockbuster, "Hancock," grossed $228 million. "Seven Pounds," currently in theaters, has pulled in a somewhat lackluster $39 million in two weeks.

Following Smith, in order, were Robert Downey Jr. ("Iron Man," "Tropic Thunder"), Christian Bale ("The Dark Knight"), Shia LaBeouf ("Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull") and LaBeouf's "Indiana Jones" co-star Harrison Ford.

The top 10 were rounded out by Adam Sandler, Reese Witherspoon, George Clooney, Angelina Jolie and Daniel Craig.

Last year's winner, Johnny Depp, who didn't have a film released this year, didn't make this year's poll, nor did seven-time winner Tom Cruise.

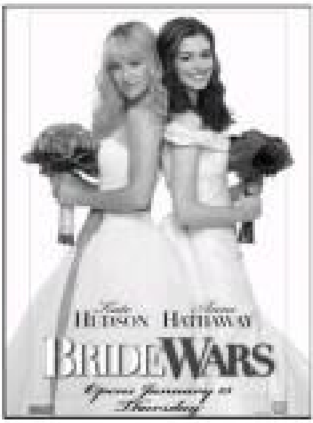
Anne Hathaway ("Rachel Getting Married") was voted the top "star of tomorrow" along with Chris Pine of "Star Trek." AP

AT THE CINEMAS

Cinema							
GLORIETTA 1	1 Iskul Bukol	2 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	3 Desperadas 2	4 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat			
GLORIETTA 4	1 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	2 Desperadas 2	3 Iskul Bukol	4 Iskul Bukol	5 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat	6 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat	7 Baler
GREENBELT 1	1 Iskul Bukol	2 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat					
GREENBELT 3	1 Baler	2 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat	3 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	4 Desperadas 2	5 Iskul Bukol		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat	2 Desperadas 2	3 Iskul Bukol	4 Baler	5 Shake, Rattle & Roll X		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat	2 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	3 Desperadas 2	4 Baler			
MARKET! MARKET!	1 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat	2 One Night Only	3 Desperadas 2	4 Iskul Bukol	5 Shake, Rattle & Roll X		
TRINOMA	1 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat	2 Iskul Bukol	3 Baler	4 One Night Only	5 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	6 Desperadas 2	7 Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat

AT THE MALLS

Mall	Event
Glorietta	Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18; Mallwide
Greenbelt	Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18; Mallwide
Alabang Town Center	Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18; Mallwide
Ayala Center Cebu	[illegible]
Market! Market!	Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18; Mallwide
Cinemalaya	[illegible]
Ayala Museum	[illegible]
TriNoma	[illegible] / Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18; Mallwide



Ex-Razorback drummer fumes: I wasn't there

FEEDBACK

TV5 happy . . .

Giving back

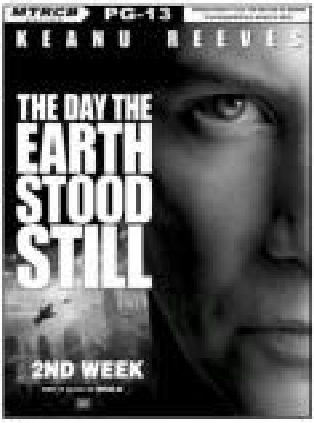
US critics . . .















ENTERTAINMENT







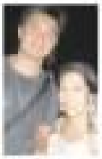


Bribes as . . .

(Inquirer, The Buzz, Showbiz Central)

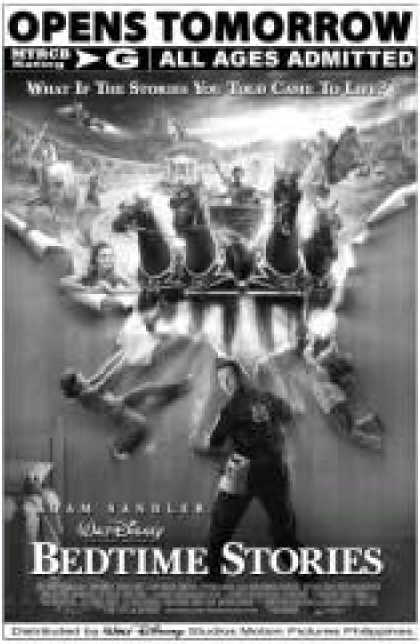


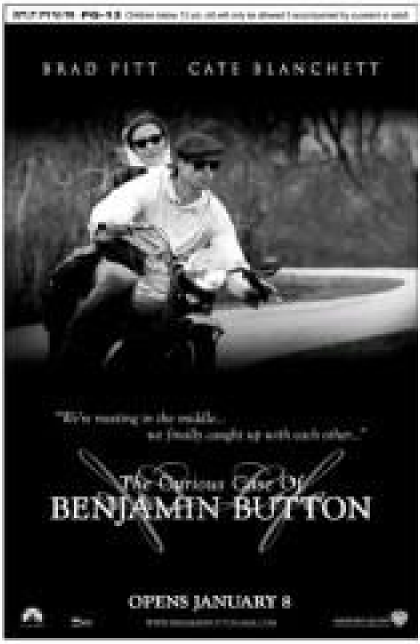




WITH Dingdong Dantes

Welcoming the new . . .









Welcoming the new year on Paradise Island

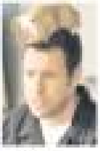
Dolly Wood

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Opening This Week

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

The Spirit



Bedtime Stories

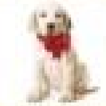
Transporter 3

Bribes as a talent manager's trade secret

Rushies



Weekend Box Office



'Case of Benjamin Button' dazzles

> Brad Pitt's performance is so gracefully convincing, that you can't help but be wowed over and over again

Review

